



**IMĀM ABŪ MANṢŪR
AL-MATURĪDĪ
RAḤIMAHULLĀH; IMĀM
AHL-US-SUNNAH; IMĀM UL
HUDĀ**

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In the beginning of Al-Muḥannad ‘alal Mufannad, Shaykh-ul-Muḥaddithīn Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī raḥimahullāh has clarified that in Fiqhī Ijtihādāt, we follow Imām Abū Ḥanīfah Nu’mān Ibn Thābit raḥimahullāh, and in Aqīdah discussions and methodology, we follow Imām Abul Ḥasan Al- Ash’arī raḥimahullāh and Imām Abū Manşūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh.

At this point, the answers to two questions must be borne in mind.

First: In matters of ‘Aqīdah, Taqlīd is not permitted. So, what is the meaning of following Imām Abul Ḥasan Ash’arī raḥimahullāh or Imām Abū Manşūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh?

Answer: There are two angles of the answer:

1. There are two types of ‘Aqā’id; (i) Uşūl Al-‘Aqā’id (ii) Furū’ Al-‘Aqā’id

With regards to the topic of ‘Aqīdah, one does not adopt Taqlīd in the Uşūl al-‘Aqā’id. In the Furū’ of Aqā’id, Taqlīd is permitted. This is because the Furū’ (subsidiary) matters are not found in the clear texts, but they are the results of the Ijtihādāt of the ‘Ulamā’. Subsequently, just as the jurists are

followed in Fiqhī Ijtihādāt, in the same way, the masters of ‘Aqīdah are followed in matters of belief. The scholars engaged in ‘Aqīdah are called ‘Mutakallimīn’.

2. Following these scholars in matters of ‘Aqīdah does not mean that they have made up the beliefs from their own side and the ‘Ulamā’ of the Ummah followed them. Nay, this means that the Mutakallimīn have explained and clarified the Islāmic beliefs and spent their entire lives defending them according to a defined methodology and system. Those that came, later on, found this methodology and system to be extremely beneficial and hence adopted it. Therefore, it is clarified that this Taqlīd or following, is in terms of the methodology of explanation and way of clarification, there is no Taqlīd in the ‘Aqā’id themselves.

This issue has been clarified by the great jurist, Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ Al-Mālikī raḥimahullāh in Tartīb-ul-Madārik under the biography of Imām Abul Ḥasan Al-Ash’arī raḥimahullāh.

Second: When the Aḥnāf follow Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh in Fiqhī matters, then why do they not follow him in matters of belief? Why did they leave him and follow Imām Abū Maṣṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh?

Answer: The Aḥnāf did not leave Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh. The methodology in matters of ‘Aqīdah that came down from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh was strengthened and solidified by Imām Abū Maṣṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh. He spent most of his life in this. Amongst the Aḥnāf, he was the one that basically encapsulated this field and its service. Whichever scholars came later on and mastered this field, they were either the direct students of Imām Abū Maṣṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh or the students of his students. They all took benefit from his books. Therefore, the link was then established to him. From this, it is clear that there is no negation of the link to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh at all.

After this introduction, let us study the biography of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh,

Name & Lineage:

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd; Abū Manṣūr Māturīdī, Samarqandī. He hails from the city of Samarqand and the town where he was born is called Māturīd. Some scholars like ‘Allāmah Bayāḍī Ḥanafī raḥimahullāh have stated that the lineage of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh meets with that of Sayyidunā Abū Ayyūb Ansārī raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu. However, this is not supported by any of the older and reliable sources.

Māturīd is read as Māturīd and Mātarīd. Some also read it as Mātarīt. ‘Allāmah ‘Abdul Karīm Al-Sam’ānī raḥimahullāh visited this place a number of times and said, ‘Virtuous people of knowledge have come from it.’[1]

The same is mentioned by Yāqūt Ḥamawī raḥimahullāh in Mu’jam Al-Buldān and Ibn Al-Athīr Al-Jazarī raḥimahullāh in Al-Lubāb.

Samarqand is one of the most famous cities of Mā warā un Nahr, i.e., Transoxiana. According to some historical reports, Alexander the Macedonian had built this area anew and some of the historians who travelled there have written, ‘Whatever has been heard of the beauty of this city is correct. In fact, the reality is that its beauty is much more than what was imagined.’

Birth:

Most historians have not dealt with the biography and especially the date of birth of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh. Therefore, one will find most sources silent on this aspect. However, all gratitude is for Allāh Ta’ālā, those who search will definitely find it.

The research scholars state that the most preferred view is 238 A.H. This is because one of his teachers was Muḥammad Ibn Muqātil Ar-Rāzī raḥimahullāh. He passed away in 248 A.H. It necessitates that when Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh took benefit from him, his age should have been at least 10 years. It is very difficult to take benefit from a senior scholar if one's age is less than this.

Teachers:

Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh was born in an area full of knowledge and jurisprudence. There was an abundance of scholars of the Aḥnāf in that particular region. The entire area was bright and lit with the knowledge of these luminaries. Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh shone out because of his great ability and his excellent teachers. His efforts and works acquired widespread acceptance and the scholars of the Aḥnāf adopted his way in the matters of 'Aqā'id. He became the spokesperson for the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā'ah.

Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh has the good fortune of being amongst the transmitters of the books of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh, especially his brief works on 'Aqā'id. He transmitted these books with an unbroken chain and spread their teachings.

Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh narrated these 'Aqīdah books of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh (1) Al-Fiqh Al-Absat (2) Risālah ilā 'Uthmān Al-Battā (3) Al-'Ālim wal Muta'allim (4) Wasiyyat ilā Yūsuf ibn Khālīd, from his Shuyūkh, Shaykh Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn 'Abbās Al-'Iyādī raḥimahullāh, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Ishāq Al-Jauzjānī raḥimahullāh and Shaykh Nuṣayr ibn Yaḥyā Al-Balkhī raḥimahullāh. These three Shuyūkh narrated from Shaykh Abū Sulaymān Al-Jauzjānī raḥimahullāh and he from Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan Shaybānī raḥimahullāh and he from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh.

This unbroken chain of transmission is proof that whatever works Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh did in the field of 'Aqā'id and the

methodology he adopted, the basis of it all was the same thought and concern that was laid down by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh. Those who have studied the life of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh know very well that just as he laid the foundations of Fiqh, in the same way, he gave shape and form to the discussions of ‘Aqīdah, in speaking on behalf of the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā’ah, because of the emergence of deviated groups. Although later on, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh was devoted to Fiqh and this field became that which he was recognized for, the student of his student, Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh took on this particular science and developed it. It is due to this aspect that this field of study was then ascribed to Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh, rather than Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh. And Allāh Ta’āla knows best.

Renowned Teachers:

A few of the renowned teachers of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh are mentioned below:

1. Imām Muḥammad ibn Muqātil Ar-Rāzī raḥimahullāh. He was a high-ranking Faqīh and Muḥaddith. ‘Allāmah ibn Kamāl Pāsha raḥimahullāh has written that this scholar was in the fourth rank of the students of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh in the field of ‘Aqā’id. He was the judge of Rayy for a while too. He passed away in 248 A.H. ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Zāhid Al-Kawtharī raḥimahullāh has mentioned this to be the preferred view.

2. Imām Abū Naṣr Aḥmad Al-‘Iyāḍī raḥimahullāh. Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh had a special relationship with this teacher. The lineage of this teacher shows that he was from the family of the ṣaḥābī, Sayyidunā Sa’d Ibn ‘Ubādah raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu. Imām Abū Naṣr Aḥmad Al-‘Iyāḍī raḥimahullāh was extremely virtuous and high ranking, to the degree that some have said, ‘Indeed the proof of the veracity of the madh-hab of Abū Ḥanīfah is that Imām Aḥmad Al-‘Iyāḍī adopts it.’[2]

3. Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn Ishāq Al-Jauzjānī raḥimahullāh. He was a great scholar and a master of Uṣūl and Furū'. He studied under Imām Abū Sulaymān Al-Jauzjānī raḥimahullāh.

4. Nuṣayr Ibn Yaḥyā Al-Balkhī raḥimahullāh. He was a master in Ḥanafī Fiqh and 'Ilm-ul-Kalām. He passed away in 268 A.H.

Status in Knowledge:

The status of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh can be gauged from his written works, the chain of his students and the titles that were given to him by the biographers. He has been referred to as Imām-ul-Hudā, Imām-ul-Mutakallimīn, Muṣaḥḥih 'Aqā'id Al-Muslimīn.

His written works testify to his great standing. Some of his outstanding works are:

1. Ta'wīlāt Ahl-us-Sunnah
2. Kitāb-ul-Jadal
3. Kitāb-ut-Tauḥīd
4. Sharḥ Al-Fiqh Al-Akbar
5. Ad-Durar fī Uṣūl-id-Dīn
6. Bayān Wahm Al-Mu'tazilah
7. Ar-Radd 'alal Qarāmitah
8. Radd Al-Imāmah
9. Ar-Radd 'alā Furū' Al-Qarāmitah

10. Radd Al-Uṣūl Al-Khamsah

The oldest institutions in the Muslim world, like Al-Azhar in Egypt, Az-Zaytuna in Tunis and others in Transoxiana, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan have been teaching the works of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh for centuries. Great scholars have studied his works and continue to teach them.

Students:

1. Abul Qāsim As-Samarqandī raḥimahullāh
2. Shaykh ‘Alī Ar-Rastaghnī raḥimahullāh
3. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdul Karīm ibn Mūsā Al-Bazdawī raḥimahullāh

Demise:

There is a slight difference of opinion regarding the date of his demise, but the preferred view is 333 A.H. He raḥimahullāh was buried in Samarqand.

A brief overview of his life:

There were a number of deviated sects that arose in Mā warā’ un Nahr during the life of Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh. Three of them are worthy of mention; the Mu’tazilah, the Shia and the Karrāmiyyah. The non-Muslim philosophers had also an influence in the area once their books were translated into Arabic.

Imām Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh stood up and spoke on behalf of the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā’ah, he defended their creed and refuted the deviated sects and their ideologies. His Tafsīr bears testimony to his great work in this field. He presents the views of the Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamā’ah and together with this, he refutes the incorrect views and beliefs promulgated by the deviants.

Conclusion:

The life of Imām Abū Maṣṣūr Al-Māturīdī raḥimahullāh demands that we study it deeply and go deep into the lives of our senior and elder scholars; it is his right that we benefit from his knowledge and munificence. Although his works were difficult to access before, now that they have come out in published form, it is not difficult to draw benefits from them.

The attack today upon Islām is from outside; from other religions, and from inside. The attack is launched by many, but the attack of the Modernists and Liberals, from the inside, seems to go unnoticed. Every Muslim must stand up and understand what is happening and how his life as a Muslim is being made more difficult as the days go by. We must focus our attention in the direction of the arrows being fired at the Muslims, and not on each other.

May Allāh Ta'āla reward him on behalf of the ummah and grant us the ability to follow in his footsteps. Āmīn

[1] Al-Ansāb p.498

[2] Al-Jawāhir Al-Mudī'ah vol.2 p.562